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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4843  
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 002024

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FOR NEA/ARP, INL/HSTC, AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2016

TAGS: PHUM ELAB KU TIP  
SUBJECT: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/INTERIOR MINISTER WELCOMES  
U.S. CONCERNS ON COMBATING TIP

REF: STATE 85464

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met with First Deputy Prime Minister Shaykh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, who holds the Defense and Interior portfolios as well, on May 31 to discuss TIP issues. (The meeting had been scheduled before the change in release dates, so the Ambassador spoke about TIP issues in general terms without discussing specifics of the TIP report or Kuwait's ranking.)

¶2. (C) The Ambassador told Shaykh Jaber that Kuwait had made progress over the past year, but that public announcements on combating TIP and protecting expatriate laborers had to be backed up by concrete actions. He emphasized that the U.S. wanted to be a partner in this effort. The Minister -- who oversees the Interior Ministry, which has responsibility for domestic workers -- agreed and said it was a humanitarian issue that had to be addressed. He pointed out that laws were particularly difficult to enforce in the domestic labor sector and that Kuwait needed help from the sending countries, which were often complicit in exploitation of their citizens. (Note: Most domestic workers are from India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Indonesia and there is credible evidence of corruption and embassy complicity in the exploitation on the part of some of these embassies. End Note.) The Minister welcomed U.S. suggestions and proposals, while noting that foreign workers also pose a significant long-term security challenge to the country.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador recommended enforcing domestic labor contracts, establishing a shelter for domestic workers, and vigorously prosecuting offenders. He also urged greater transparency in the TIP-related prosecution statistics provided to Post. The Minister responded that courts work on prosecutions, but the length of time it takes for cases to be resolved is a problem. He noted that the GOK frequently pays for workers' tickets home if they encounter problems and want to leave the country. Lastly, the Minister noted that the GOK respects U.S. analysis and suggestions on TIP even if it does not agree on everything that appears in the report.

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